LINKAGES BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM
AN INTRODUCTION

Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity
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Anna Iványi
"A tourist is someone, who hits the road, because in the middle of the uniformity of his work and the crowd of his worries, in his dreams a braver world appears, where the grass is greener, the sky is bluer, the mountains are higher, the houses are nicer or more special, the people are friendlier; and who is – never held back by fatigue – just looking and looking for the original of this dream, and because we live on this earth, he may never find it; nevertheless he is not losing his spirit, as his delight comes from the quest itself."

Loránd Eötvös
Hungarian scientist (1848-1919)

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is obviously an important multidisciplinary intersection of human actions and nature, sometimes posing as a threat, sometimes considered as a panacea for economic and social decline. Tourism-related activities make up the world’s largest economic sector, providing over 200 million jobs worldwide. The tourism industry – both domestic and international – has important direct and indirect impacts on many other economic sectors, making it a major economic force.

The dynamic expansion of the tourism sector has resulted in tourism becoming the fastest growing industry in the world with an average annual growth rate of 4.2% between 1990 and 2004 (WTO statistics). At the start of the 21st century, about 700 million international arrivals were registered world-wide, almost twice as many as 15 years ago. The number of travelling people was 760 million in 2004, 10% more than the previous year. According to the latest data, 74 million tourist arrivals have been registered in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 2004, 8% more than in the year before. The WTO forecasts that the number of international arrivals will reach 1.56 billion by 2020. However it is important to keep in mind that only about three to five percent of the world’s population is able to travel abroad, and these are primarily people from rich industrial countries.

Tourism was considered a “white industry” for a long time, meaning it was thought that there is no need to measure its (negative) environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts. In the 60s and early 70s, tourism was praised as an engine for economic development, and an effective tool to promote understanding between nations and cultures, therefore many countries invested serious efforts to increase tourist arrivals and develop the necessary infrastructure. In was only in the mid 1970s that critical voices were raised concerning the impact of tourism on the ecological, economic and socio-cultural environment. Experience showed that the continuous and often uncontrolled growth of the indus-

try can lead to severe degradation of natural and cultural environment.
The raised awareness regarding natural values and beauties together with
the degradation and overuse of the classical holiday resorts led to an in-
creased interest in "unspoiled" and less developed exotic destinations
with a low tourist density. Today, tourism to natural destinations com-
prises around 50% of all international tourism and is increasing at a rate
of around 10-30% per year, much more rapidly than the industry as a
whole. Previously neglected remote areas are being "discovered" and
becoming more and more visited, imposing an increasing burden on the
host area. The faster and more intense tourism development occurs in a
natural area, the more it changes the natural and socio-cultural environ-
ment in the region affected.
As it is also gaining momentum in the international community, efforts
must be made to minimize the adverse impacts of the tourism industry.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sustainable development as a framework

Sustainable development

The concept of "sustainability" in its link to human development originated in the 1970s with books such as Goldsmith's "Blueprint for Survival" (1972) and the Club of Rome's "Limits to Growth" (1972). In the same year 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm focused on the reconciliation of environment and economic development.

In 1987, the term sustainable development became more widely known. The most commonly quoted definition of sustainable development comes from the publication by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) of its report "Our Common Future" (also known as the Brundtland report):

*Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable - to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Another popular definition can be found in Caring for the Earth, a document issued by IUCN, UNEP and WWF in 1991 to succeed their earlier (1980) World Conservation Strategy, where sustainable development is defined as “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem”.

World Bank economist Herman Daly in his book “Beyond Growth” (1996) gives the following definition: “Sustainable development aims to achieve social betterment without growing beyond carrying capacity”.

Basic principles of sustainability

1. Holistic approach, intersectoral integration

Holistic approach means system thinking, trying to understand how things are interrelated and considering all potential effects of any intervention into a system and applying the precautionary principle to avoid the creation of a problem, instead of trying to treat it afterwards. A holistic approach requires the reconciliation of long and short term, local and
global interests, in order to prevent shifting burdens in time and space, calling for a permanent search for interlinkages and interdependencies and the constant analysis of cause – effect relations.

Intersectoral integration aims at linking economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects in one approach and supports their cooperation.

2. Social justice
Social justice means that the fundamental needs of people are satisfied, the benefits of resource use are shared in a fair and equitable way, access to resources is limited or restricted for local communities and equal chances are ensured for all. Burdens, such as the negative environmental impacts of production should not be shifted to other members of society, taking also into consideration that the small units of society are not isolated, but supplementing each other (the principle of coexistence). Decisions of a sustainable society are made following the principle of subsidiarity: by the affected stakeholders, at the local level, based on more realistic local knowledge and analysis of local conditions, driven by mutual generosity. The subsidiarity principle of the European Union means that decisions should be made on the lowest possible level.

3. Wise and ethical use of natural resources
We have to preserve resources whilst they are being used, so a balance between human and natural interests must be created. Traditional uses – coexistence of human and nature – take into account the whole cycle of production process, do not involve external resources and make full use of local resources, without exceeding the carrying capacity. Wise use also means production and consumption patterns, which are building rather on culture and knowledge, instead of demanding the heavy use of energy and material. Stability and diversity go hand in hand: the more elements of natural resources are used in a multifunctional way, the more stable the economic structure becomes. This also entails the development of local society and the preservation of natural diversity.

4. Ensuring the quality of environment
The quality of human life should be improved while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems and maintaining the quality of the environment in its entirety. Environment as a whole is more than the assembly of elements, including also the interactions among the elements. The preservation of values that we can not change to money (the security of natural resources, the conservation of environment productivity, drinking water, clean air, clean environment and the aesthetics of landscape) can only be ensured through increased environmental awareness. How-
ever, environmental education is not sufficient to reach this goal; production and consumption patterns, the behaviour of society should follow the same guidelines.

Tourism within the framework of sustainable development

Tourism can be a tool for social betterment, thus contributing to sustainable development. As such, tourism should

- ensure the satisfaction of the tourist
- ensure the satisfaction and economic benefits of the local community
- use local resources in a sustainable way
- ensure the quality of the environment.

Tourism within the framework of sustainable development implies a long-term perspective along with general re-thinking of tourism politics and refers to all forms of tourism; in the sense to provide lasting stability of all tourism in ecologic, economic and socio-cultural terms.

Tourism is a cross-cutting issue, and can therefore serve as an opening gate for regional development. It is essential to bear in mind that tourism should not evolve to a mono-economy in the destination region but should rather be integrated in existing economic and environmental conditions and enhance local potentials. The production and promotion of “local quality products”, for example, can serve as a starting point and lead to a chain reaction with tourism serving as a kick-off for other industries.

In this context, tourism development can only be understood as an integrated part of regional development processes and therefore has to fulfil certain conditions, which are reflected in joint regional planning and management.

What is ecotourism?

There have been several attempts to give an undoubted, clear and straightforward definition of ecotourism, but none of these became widely accepted and recognized and the existing definitions sometimes vary significantly. There are strong debates even on the terms used, not to mention their exact content or practical implementation. The term ecotourism is often used by tour operators meaning travel to natural areas; this way the value of the original concept is lost, and became a tool for
greenwashing in the tourism industry. As Bob Harvey, nature photographer and expert in tourism planning and communication, puts it, "the word ecotourism became a buzz-word in the early 1990s, but so many people used it in so many different ways that it has become virtually meaningless". Others prefer “sustainable tourism” being more appropriate for grabbing the essence of the concept. This practice is strongly questioned by others, claiming that a sector like tourism cannot be “sustainable” in itself and sustainability can be achieved only on the level of the whole society.

The following list gives an overview of the manifold existing models and definitions, without trying to interpret or evaluate ecotourism and sustainable tourism (in order not to escalate confusion, green tourism, responsible tourism, rural tourism, nature tourism, soft tourism, integrative tourism, gentle tourism and others are not tackled here):

**Ecotourism** is “...responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people”.
(The International Ecotourism Society, 1991)

**Ecotourism** is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.
(IUCN, 1996)

**Ecotourism** is "nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable". (The Australian Commission on National Ecotourism Strategy, 1994)

**Sustainable tourism** "operates within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources; recognizes the contribution that people and communities, customs and lifestyles, make to the tourism experience; accepts that these people must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism; and is guided by the wishes of local people and communities in the host areas".
(Tourism Concern & WWF, 1992)

**Sustainable tourism** is "all forms of tourism development, management and activity that maintain the environmental, social and economic integrity and well-being of natural, built and cultural resources in perpetuity".
(Federation of Nature and National Parks, 1993)
Sustainable tourism is tourism that puts sustainable development into practice in its development, management and integration with the wider economy, society and the environment. It includes the participation of local communities in tourism and ensures that they have an equitable share in its benefits, so as to protect the quality human and natural environments and resources on which tourism depends; and operating within natural capacities for the regeneration and productivity of natural resources.
(UNEP 1999)

Sustainable tourism is “any form of development or management of tourist activities which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic growth and well-being of individuals living in, working in or visiting the protected area”.
(The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Area, 1995)

The development of sustainable tourism meets the following requirements:

• Tourist resources - natural, historical, cultural and others - are preserved in a way that allows them to be used in the future, whilst benefiting today’s society;
• The planning and management of tourist development are conducted in a way that avoids triggering serious ecological or socio-cultural problems in the region concerned;
• The overall quality of the environment in the tourist region is preserved and, if necessary, improved;
• The level of tourist satisfaction should be maintained to ensure that destinations continue to be attractive and retain their commercial potential; and
• Tourism should largely benefit all members of society.
(WTO, Guide for Local Authorities on Sustainable Tourism Development, 1999)

Basic principles

However, there seems to be a certain consensus about the principles of this kind of tourism, also used by scientific programs and studies:

1. Involves travel to natural destinations. These destinations are often remote areas, whether inhabited or uninhabited, and are usually under some kind of environmental protection.
2. **Minimizes Impact.** Tourism causes damage. Ecotourism strives to minimize the adverse affects of hotels, trails, and other tourism infrastructure. Minimization of impact also requires that the numbers and mode of behaviour of tourists be regulated to ensure limited damage to the ecosystem, by restricting tourism to the carrying capacity of the area (e.g. limited number of tourists, low consumption of water, energy and other resources, low level of mobility and use of environment friendly transportation, minimal change in landscape-using patterns through constructions etc.).

3. **Builds environmental awareness.** Ecotourism means education, for both tourists and residents of affected communities. The tourist shall „learn about the places and peoples visited" in order to "minimize their negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures", in accordance with The Ecotourism Society guidelines. Ecotourism requires well-trained, multilingual naturalist guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication. Ecotourism projects should also contribute to the education of the surrounding community and the broader public in the host country.

4. **Provides direct financial benefits for conservation:** Ecotourism should financially support and raise funds for environmental protection, research and education.

5. **Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people:** Stakeholders, including local and indigenous communities must be involved, ensuring their participation in planning, development and operation. They must also receive income and other tangible benefits (potable water, roads, health clinics, etc.) from the conservation area and the tourist facilities. Just and human working opportunities must be ensured for local people, and facilities must be run by or in partnership with communities of the destination. Ecotourism must also help shift economic and political control to the local community, village, cooperative, or entrepreneur.

6. **Respects local culture:** Ecotourism strives to be culturally respectful and have a minimal effect on both the natural environment and the human population of the host country. Ecotourism, like all forms of tourism, often involves an unequal and money-driven relationship between the visitor and the host. A responsible ecotourist is learning beforehand about the local customs, respecting dress codes and other social norms and not intruding on the community.
7. **Supports human rights and democratic movements:** Tourism often is considered as an effective tool for building international understanding and world peace, however, this does not always happen, and tourists often disregard the political context, the social climate or the internal struggles of the host country. Ecotourism strives to respect, learn about and benefit both the local environment and local communities; giving economic benefits and showing cultural sensitivities to local communities is closely related to understanding their political circumstances. In certain cases, international boycott might be the right option in repressive states, where human rights are not respected, unless the income generated by tourism is necessary for the improvement of the situation.

*Based on Martha Honey’s "Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who owns Paradise?"*

### Impacts of tourism

As a fast-growing sector, tourism is an increasing source of pressure on natural resources and the environment, affecting the social conditions, cultures and local environment of tourist areas; this trend may lead to the reduction of the benefits of tourism to the local and wider economy.

As far as economic benefits are concerned, tourism certainly constitutes an opportunity for economic development, economic diversification and the growth of related activities. Thus tourism may present a potential for realizing benefits. The ecotourism strategy of Australia states: „ecotourism offers the potential to generate foreign exchange earnings, employment, and other economic and social benefits, particularly in regional areas. [...] Ecotourism can also provide resources for environmental conservation and management and an incentive for the conservation and sustainable use of private land.”

The main pressures come from transport, the use of water and land, energy use by buildings and facilities, and the generation of wastes. Erosion of soils and impacts on biodiversity are also tourism-related issues. In some popular destinations, these pressures have resulted in irreversible degradation of the local environment.

Tourism is the main driver behind the increase in the demand for passenger transport, with its associated environmental impacts. This demand is expected to continue to grow, including a significant contribution to doubling of air traffic over the next 20 years. Cars and
In considering the role of tourism in the sustainable use of biological resources and their diversity, it is important that the potential adverse impacts of tourism are fully considered. These are roughly divided into environmental impacts and socioeconomic impacts, the latter generally being those imposed on local and indigenous communities. Although such impacts on biological resources may be less easy to quantify and analyze systematically, they may be at least as important as, if not more important than, direct environmental impacts in the long term.

**Possible negative impacts on natural resources:**

- Direct use of natural resources by tourists (water, energy etc.): the water consumption of a tourist on holiday might exceed 10-100 times the water consumption of local inhabitants, causing major problems in arid and semiarid areas, such as the Mediterranean
- Land use for accommodation, transport and other infrastructure construction, taking the land from agriculture and other traditional land uses

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**Potential benefits of tourism**

- Diversification of economic activities
- Increase in local income
- Employment opportunities, potential for qualified, high added-value jobs
- Multiplier effects, stimulating growth in other economic sectors
- Improved production through transfer of technology
- Reduction of spatial and social disparities
- Infrastructure development
- Counteracting urbanization tendencies through providing better living conditions for rural communities
- Financing nature conservation
- Incentive to the preservation and restoration of natural and cultural values, including traditional knowledge
- Promotion of cultural exchange and peace
- Increasing social and environmental awareness
- Recreation, contribution to well-being of people

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*Europe's environment: the third assessment (the “Kiev assessment”)*

*European Environment Agency, 2003*
• Overexploitation of resources as building materials (wood, stone etc.)
• Deforestation and intensified or unsustainable use of land
• Spoiled landscapes, which then are unable to fulfil their ecological role, and also lose their socio-cultural and intrinsic values, and cannot provide recreation or aesthetic pleasure any more
• Direct impact on the species composition and on wildlife (killing animals for food or to produce souvenirs for tourists, to trade them alive; hunting certain species can be the specific aim of tourism; for invertebrates and plant species walking and tramping can also be fatal, but running over by cars and vehicles affects larger species as well; vehicles often destroy ponds and other wet habitats, which are the breeding places for amphibians and reptiles etc.)
• Disturbance to the behaviour of animals, through misbehaviour of tourists, missing or inadequate visitor management and exceeded carrying capacity. In certain cases the mere presence of people is sufficient to disturb mating, breeding, feeding or any other natural activity of species.
• Alteration to wildlife habitats and ecosystems, fragmentation and loss of habitats; infrastructure developments that are impassable for plants and animals, can cut off breeding and feeding areas or migration routes, or in case of changing circumstances, the population is unable to move to other, more appropriate locations – this makes the preservation of ecological corridors and stepping stones extremely important
• Risk of introducing alien species, leading to the disturbance or even disappearance of some elements of the local flora and fauna
• Coastal and soil erosion: the production of the fertile soil layer might take centuries, but if exposed to wind and water, for example because the naturally protecting vegetation is removed, it can disappear during a few seasons
• Large production of waste
• Extraction of groundwater
• Disposal of untreated sewage
• Disposal of waste
• Air pollution, primarily from transportation
• Noise
Possible negative socioeconomic impacts

- Influx of people seeking employment or entrepreneurial opportunities and related social degradation; due to the seasonality of jobs and income, the all year round employment of these people cannot be ensured, causing insecurity; at the same time traditional livelihoods are disappearing because people leave their lands in the hope of a better life in the tourism industry, leading to the loss of traditional knowledge and cultural values, and also to the displacement of other economic sectors and the loss of traditional employment opportunities

- Sudden loss of income and jobs in times of downturn, in case of monostructural development and heavy dependence on external factors

- Earnings from tourism often do not benefit the host region or country, due to the so-called foreign exchange leakage; if hotels and other tourism facilities are owned by foreign investors, it is especially true

- Unequal distribution of economic benefits among members of local communities; the increase of inequalities leads to relative poverty in communities

- Neglect of human resource development, providing only unqualified and poorly paid jobs for locals; the visitors meet the local people only in the role of “servants” to the tourists, giving way to superficial, misleading, misinterpreted intercultural encounters

- Misallocation of scarce factors of production, conflicting resource use, that is tourists or tourism facilities are privileged, even if the basic needs or interest of the local community are not met

- Distorted infrastructure development, far exceeding local needs; the maintenance of the constructed infrastructure lays a heavy burden on the local population even if the tourists left (off seasons, or because the destination is not that trendy any more or because of global conflicts detaining travel)

- Increase in land and consumer prices; in the case of a frequented holiday destination the prices can become so high, that local people cannot afford any more to buy land or a house for their children, or to eat in the restaurant
Possible negative cultural impacts

- Influence traditional practices and events by the tourist preferences: the use of folk costumes changes depending on the likes and dislikes of tourists; celebrations might take place in different way or in a different timing enabling tourists to participate, losing the essence of celebrations as special inward events of the community
- Changes in local consumption patterns, because the sight of foreign tourists wearing, eating, driving, owning different objects triggers the desire in the local community to have that lifestyle and also own those things
- Loss of access by indigenous and local communities to their land and resources as well as sacred sites; it is not uncommon to ban local people from beaches or shores or from other places that used to be the place for their recreation or religious practices, so that “they do not disturb the pleasure of the tourists”

Case study 1: Positive and negative impacts of tourism in Babia Góra National Park, Poland

The Babia Góra National Park was established in 1954, and in 1977 in was nominated as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. Forest covers 95% of the national park area. Life conditions of animals and plants are very differentiated resulting in diversification of the local fauna and flora, including endemic species also. However, most animals avoid crowded tourist trails, so the easiest ones to spot are birds and insects.

The zonation of the biosphere reserve reflects different degrees of human influence. The Core Area is excluded from human impact. The Buffer Zone includes forests that were affected by intensive forest husbandry in the past. Protective measures help its ecosystems to regenerate or to maintain their balance. In the Transition Area, woods and forests are a key public asset as a source of widely used renewable raw materials and significantly contribute to the development prospects of the vicinity of the national park. These are available to both commercial and public users.

Negative impacts of tourism in the National Park

Crowded trails in the summit area; 60% of visitors come during June-August. The trails go through the most precious places and natural curiosities which are not always important for an average visitor. This location of the trails is caused by the fact that they were built at the time when tourism was at its initial stage and the area itself was not protected there.
Erosion of the trails’ surface by tourist traffic; tourists sometimes make unauthorised paths and shortcuts. Because of destroyed surface and erosion, 14 km
which constitutes 27% of the total length of the existing trails in the Babia Góra National Park was repaired during the period 1995-2002; however, it does not meet the needs.

**Synanthropization of flora and fauna.** Existence of tourist trails changes habitat conditions at the sides of the trails. Besides this, tourists provoke movement of plants along the trails. Migration of species which are foreign for natural communities takes place by carrying seeds or plant parts by tourists. Change of the trail surface helps these species to survive. It is particularly often in places where tourist traffic is very intensive such as the entrances to the national park, the hostel and the parking lots.

**Littering.** The national park removes about 70 m$^3$ of trash gathered from the trails and their immediate vicinity. That number does not cover the trash from the rubbish bins and containers placed by the national park's waste management or the hostel's administration.

**Damaging of flora.** Tourists cause some damage to plants and plant communities occurring near the trails by trampling and mechanical destruction.

**Damaging of fauna** is caused by frightening animals. Skittishness of deer was observed during the time of the most intensive tourist traffic in the summer. Tourist traffic also makes difficult the nesting of birds. Unauthorised dog walking without a leash causes more negative effects than the presence of their owners.

**Positive impacts of tourism in the National Park**

Positive impact of tourism on protection of biodiversity is rarely noticed directly during tourists' visit in protected areas because they do not actively take part in protective activities and the time of their visit is limited. However, in the long run, the impact made on local societies is positive and influences the course of changes which take place in the period of economic transformation. Nevertheless, it depends on the attitude towards nature protection, preservation of biodiversity and the level of ecological awareness of local societies as well as the tourists themselves. The impact is made by economic and political stimuli.

**Economic potentials**

**Tourists buy services**

1. **Folk culture and crafts**

The Shepherd's Festival in Lipnica Wielka including the fair and the exhibition is a good possibility for many artists, craftsmen and agro-tourism farms to present their work. The games played at the festival are strictly connected with traditional style of life, land use and old methods of farming, and present the host culture and traditions to the tourists.

2. **Sledging cavalcades**

They are very popular during winter. Those providing the service have to have a horse; thus, they also have to have a farm managed in the extensive way. Intensive farms involved in commercial production do not keep horses because of economic reasons.
3. Agro-tourism
The competition between agro-tourism farms compels the farm owners to maintain a wide range of services. Producing food for their own use and making the guests' visit attractive, in particular for children, are connected with keeping differentiated livestock such as cows, sheep, poultry, pigs and horses, and growing many field crops, having an influence on preservation of diversified cultural landscape and habitats of plant species.

4. Local Dishes
Tourists often visit restaurants serving local dishes which are cooked using local farm products, such as dairy products from ewe's milk, meat dishes made of mutton, etc. Extensive pastural farming has been preserved up to nowadays. Sheep-grazing is the main factor of preservation the traditional use of pastures, and, what is connected, preservation and protection of functioning meadow ecosystems and their biodiversity.

5. Regional products
They buy not only souvenirs and gadgets but also regional crafts, mainly sweaters, gloves, hats, shoes, animal skins and others. This is a very important factor helping to preserve sheep-farming, particularly during time when there are not markets or government help.

Tourists are sensitive to aesthetic impression
It compels the people living in the region to keep the surrounding tidy, not only in the immediate vicinity of lodging but also in the whole region. Littered streams, forest margins and roadsides, unauthorized dumping grounds and sewage disposal discourage and do not meet with approval.

Political potentials

Tourists are observers

Management malpractice and mistakes are quickly noticed, and restoring the management which is in accordance with rules can be crucial in preserving a species or functioning of ecosystem. Introducing technology and management practices which are friendly to the environment simulates popularity of the region among tourists; however, it depends on ecological awareness and sensitivity. Informing the authorities about vandalism, illegal plant and communities damaging, capture and killing of protected or rare animals. Tourists are voters also

It plays an important role in adopting a strategy and undertaking action at the national and regional levels which can be crucial in preserving the natural values and biodiversity of the area and stopping the extinction of species.
Case study 2: Impact of tourism and sport in the High Tatra National Park, Slovakia

Tourism, as we know today, started to appear in 1871, when the Tatra region was connected with the rest of the world by international railway. Hotels were built close to the railway stations, and a number of climatic centres have grown in the mountainous zone of the Tatra. Ski resorts, sledge and toboggan tracks have been built since the turn of the century. Until 1885, the operation of tourist establishments was limited to the summer period. Later during the whole year operation, this seasonal rhythm (summer and winter peaks) was well visible. This fact was overlooked when new tourist facilities were built, and therefore the Tatra now has an over-dimensioned capacity, left unused between seasons.

Besides the direct negative impacts of tourism and sport activities, such as disturbed landscape panorama, development in wildlife areas (e.g. more than 100 ha forest taken for the World Championship in Nordic skiing in 1970), and damage caused by motorized visitors, there was also a damage of ecosystems in the forest zone and in the alpine environment, appearing first in the vicinity of Tatra settlements, camping sites, chalet areas, transport facilities, mountain huts and tourist trails.

Beside the destruction of ecosystems, pollution with garbage and damage to vegetation, another serious problem is the unsuitable behaviour of visitors towards wild animals, especially their intentional disturbance by photographing, filming and feeding.

Source: Jana Smrekova’s lecture at the conference Urban Alps in 2002
www.urban-alps.at/referate/Referat_Smrekova.pdf
Case study 3: An economic alternative? Costs and benefits of tourism in the Padis Plateau, Romania

The 1100-1300 m high Padis area lies in the Apuseni Mountains, in the Northern part of the Bihor Mountains in Romania. This karstic relief has some specific features beside the usual karstic geomorphology, such as lapies, dolines, pot-holes, gorges and polyes, including the special surface hydrological network with ponors, izbues and avens, creating a unique landscape; the karstic relief causes interesting meteorological phenomena, and hosts a valuable subterranean fauna with endemic species for each cave, and a great variety of flora with endemic and relict species.

Human impact has been present for centuries, however, environmental problems have increased with the start of massive deforestation, when mining activities with the related heavy infrastructure began after the 2nd World War during the soviet administration. After 1989 mining was terminated, leaving behind huge amounts of industrial waste. However, illegal exploitation of wood continued, serving as the main source of income for the local population. Aggravated by overgrazing, the thin soil layer is fast eroded and the landscape is continuously degrading.

In this situation, tourism appears to be a solution, providing income for the local population, increasing the value of the natural beauties and making the inhabitants interested in their preservation. On the other hand, the increasing pressure of tourist activities – this means thousands of people camping on the plateau, as the accommodation capacity is quite limited – already threatens the cave habitats, tourists chase away large mammals, such as bears, lynx and chamois, pollute the crystal clear water with detergents and waste, buy traditional hay fields for the illegal building of weekend houses, etc.

The LIFE Environment project Combined actions for the protection and the development of the APUSENI Mountains natural heritage implemented in 1999-2001 addressed this issue, by wishing to promote the sustainable use of karst areas and landscapes and to mitigate the impacts of uncontrolled and unorganized tourism.

The activities of this project included the renovation of marked trails, installation of information panels and “creating facilities for visitors aimed at reducing the negative impact on the environment”.

Photo by Benedek R. Sallai

Photo by Piotr Dabrowski
However, the collection of waste does not substantially improve the ecological condition of the area, neither contributes to local livelihoods. Efforts to establish a National Park and thus enhance the protection status of these unique values are continuous, while the problems are only worsening year after year.

Sources:
EU LIFE projects database

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS

Managing tourism-related activities can effectively contribute to controlling tourism related environmental impacts. Management can include different tools, such as land use planning, business permits, zoning controls and others, in order to direct and control the development and operation of tourism.

Management tools

There is a wide range of instruments and measures to select from, when it comes to the control of tourism activities.

Legal measures

Legal measures might include rules, regulations, sanctions – national legislation should establish the framework for land use in tourism development, physical facilities, management and investment in tourism, etc. This framework should be in place everywhere, although it should provide the necessary flexibility for destinations to develop their own regulations that best fit their specific requirements and needs. These rules should be applicable within the given boundaries, while staying in line with international and national legislation and guidelines as well.

Regulatory tools

Zoning is an especially useful tool, which should be applied in every land or water use plan to define management objectives and according regulations in different zones. Zoning must always be comprehensive, considering the different socio-economic activities, including tourism, but also natural areas which should be left undeveloped. It is important to understand that some areas of relevant biodiversity should be conserved for their own value and that not all relevant biodiversity zones should experience visitation.
Visitor channelling. It could help environmental protection significantly. As many European laws protect free access, imposing limits to accessibility is allowed only in certain cases, depending on protection status or based on international conventions.

Limits to specific activities. All kinds of tourist activities should be assessed in order to prevent or mitigate impacts on the environment or conflicts among the different users. In the case of infrastructure development, special permits or environmental impact assessment might be also needed; some activities may be forbidden, or just limited to certain periods of the year or to a limited number of users.

Certification. Certification is a set of criteria that is followed on a voluntary basis. The requirements should aim for an improvement of environmental performance, including biodiversity considerations as well. These schemes can contribute to a lower level of resource consumption, and at the same time they can also promote the use of local products and even strengthen local identity. They are important not only for marketing, but also for education, discussion and cooperation. The implementation of certifications and eco-labels is a long-term and source demanding task which needs high level of collaboration, especially because the certification should be officially recognized by all stakeholders.

Often though, education and

A good example of a comprehensive tourism zoning plan includes the following specific zones:

a) Strictly protected zone (sometimes called “sanctuary” or “absolute reserve” zones), where the presence of all types of tourists and tourist infrastructure are strictly prohibited.

b) Restricted tourism zone (sometimes called “wilderness” zone), where access is allowed only to a limited number of tourists, usually on foot (or, in some cases, by rowboat).

c) Moderate tourism zone, where visitors are encouraged to carry out diverse low-impact activities compatible with the natural and/or cultural environment.

d) Semi-intensive tourism development zone, which should always be an area of limited extent (especially when near environmentally-sensitive natural areas), where some moderate-impact facilities are included (e.g. ecolodge, visitor centre, limited parking areas).

e) Intensive tourism development zone, which should only occur in highly popular mass tourism destinations (e.g. beach resorts, ski resorts, amusement and theme parks), where a considerable degree of concentration of tourists and tourist facilities take place. Obviously, in ecotourism destinations (especially in protected areas), there is no room for this zoning category.

For comparison the six IUCN management categories of protected areas:

**Ia Strict Nature Reserve**: Protected area managed mainly for science.

**Ib Wilderness Area**: Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection.

**II National Park**: Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation.

**III Natural Monument**: Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features.

**IV Habitat/Species Management Area**: Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention.

**V Protected Landscape/Seascape**: Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation.

**VI Managed Resource Protected Area**: Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.

Awareness about certification is missing, and there are too many certification systems in Europe and over the world, which is confusing for the consumer.

**Concentration or dispersion of development pressures and tourist flows.** It is a matter of previous planning and visitor flow management, whether the dispersal or the concentration of tourists is favourable from an environmental point of view. Usually dispersal is preferred, but sometimes a highly overloaded, but less vulnerable site can help preserving naturally more valuable areas, while visitor satisfaction and experience are also ensured. More than one center of tourist development can also be chosen as an alternative solution.

**Land use/spatial planning** can be an effective tool in the case of islands and coastal areas, but also within cities, when changes in the functions and uses of the area occur and careful planning of land development can direct tourist flows to mitigate negative impacts.

**Economic tools**

**Pricing** can be used to limit or control tourism development and growth. Imposing the appropriate level of fees for parking or for entry can limit the number of visitors while generating income for the given destination or attraction. Although pricing is the most powerful tool in the short run, it should be carefully applied. Defining a pricing policy, where certain groups have to pay a lower price, is against European laws, since it implies discrimination. In some cases, particularly for large natural areas with low visitation rates, the management costs of administering a system of fees may exceed the revenue collected.

**Commercial licence fees.** The user pays principle should be extended to commercial operators, through licence fees and commercially realistic rental charges on leases and concessions. Rights to operate within park bounda-
ries may be offered to the private sector on a competitive auction basis, to raise capital funding for environmental protection. 

*Taxes* may be used as a way to incorporate in prices various externalities like negative environmental impacts, and the revenue can be used for environmental protection. Taxes can be imposed on products used in nature-based recreation, such as camping gears, fishing equipment, or on services, such as 'bed taxes'. The creation and use of such incomes should be as close to each other as possible, so tourism-related taxes should preferably be managed on the destination or municipal level. Increased prices can discourage tourists and entrepreneurs as well. 

*Incentive schemes* should be applied in both public and private sectors in order to spread tourism demand over time and space and to optimise the use of accommodation.

**Organisational tools**

*Reservation and booking systems* facilitate management of tourist flows. 

*Information management systems* can give information on congestion, peaks, traffic for example on a website, and this way they can discourage tourists from visiting the site.

*Market control.* At present this area is quite unexploited, despite the great potential of co-ordination between management, planning and tourism marketing: marketing and communication are able to target particular market segments and undertake promotions for selected periods.

*Training and education* are essential in enhancing the links between tourism development and the conservation of biodiversity. Awareness-raising activities should address local communities, local planners and managers, the private sector, decision-makers, tourists and all stakeholders to reduce the adverse impacts of tourism activities. Training and education should be an inherent component of any other initiatives aiming to make tourism sustainable.
Management approaches

The ecosystem approach and adaptive management

In all cases, tourism activities and development should consider the “triple bottom line”, meaning that economic, environmental and social factors must be addressed at the same time. This calls for integrated management within the framework of ecosystem approach developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

As requirements and available options alter over time; the almost constant change of socioeconomic and ecological conditions, the multiple external and internal threats call for an approach, where the experiences on the consequences of management actions are channelled back to the next cycle of planning and decision-making. The effects of management actions are cumulative, and the limited knowledge on the operation and interconnected nature of elements in an ecosystem requires adaptive management. The basis for this approach is that „if human understanding of nature is imperfect, then human interactions with nature (e.g. management actions) should be experimental.” (Lee 1993).

Adaptive management is a systematic and rigorous approach to learning from the outcomes of management actions, to address changing conditions and unforeseen consequences. It involves seeking and analyzing feedback, synthesizing the existing knowledge, and making forecasts about the potential outcomes.

In any of the main steps (Assess, Design, Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, Adjust) of adaptive management new questions can be asked, new options can be identified, leading to the redefinition of the problem or a new approach to solving it, in a continual cycle of improvement.
The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development also emphasize the need for adaptive management:

*The ecosystem approach requires adaptive management to deal with the complex and dynamic nature of ecosystems and the absence of complete knowledge or understanding of their functioning. Ecosystem processes are often non-linear, and the outcome of such processes often shows time-lags. The result is discontinuities, leading to surprise and uncertainty. Management must be adaptive in order to be able to respond to such uncertainties and contain elements of “learning-by-doing” or research feedback. Measures may need to be taken even when some cause-and-effect relationships are not yet fully established scientifically.*

**Principles of adaptive ecosystem management**

1. Wide-ranging threats cannot be alleviated with a single management action
2. It is easier to alleviate internal threats than external threats
3. Formulating and evaluating management actions in an ecosystem management framework accounts for interdependencies among social, economic and ecological values
4. Adaptive management allows managers to handle uncertainty regarding the likely impacts of alternative management actions on social, economic and ecological values
5. The managers are likely to have greater success in alleviating the impacts of threats by working collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders to establish and achieve common goals.
6. Success in alleviating threats is increased by integrating knowledge about (a) cultural, social, economic and ecological values; (b) institutional arrangements influencing management and operations; and (c) state-of-the-art decision-making approaches.

Implementing the adaptive ecosystem management needs the evaluation of alternative management actions, taking into account the social, economic and ecological consequences over the long-term and with a regional perspective. The relatively certain and uncertain outcomes of planned actions should be distinguished, and also the relative importance of these consequences to the affected stakeholders should be considered. Based on the above considerations – and keeping in mind the vision and goals of the protected area, and the primary role it is willing to play in the given context – the possible areas of stakeholder discontent and disagreement can be identified and addressed. The approach can yield significant

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benefits in a long timeframe, however, a strong support of the stakeholders who bear the consequences of some experimental management actions is essential.

**Carrying capacity and other methodologies**

Tourism carrying capacity refers to the carrying capacity of the biophysical and social environment with respect to tourism activity and development, representing the maximum level of visitor use and related infrastructure that the area can accommodate. The definition and consideration of tourism carrying capacity needs to be an integrated part of a tourism development planning process, as part of an overall framework including goals, objectives and policy measures guiding the local community, planners and decision-makers. Setting the limits of capacity in terms of tourism activities involves a vision about local development, which vision should be formulated with the participation of local stakeholders in all phases of planning and management.

In considering carrying capacity, a wide range of dimensions need to be taken into account in practice, including physical, ecological, sociodemographic and other characteristics of the area; these components are assigned different weights (or importance) in different destinations, depending on the characteristics of the place, the type(s) of tourism present and the tourism-environment interface.

The basic idea of determining a limit to the volume of visitors and their activities is often a concern to local planners and managers, but in general, there is little experience in the application of carrying capacity in the management of tourist destinations, partly because of the difficulties in calculating such a threshold or limit. However, when the defined and agreed content of carrying capacity is put into practice, an agreement among the affected stakeholders, local people and users is essential, as their support is needed to implement the planned measures.

As a criticism of the quantitative approach of carrying capacity, several methodological tools, *management-by-objectives approaches* such as Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), Visitor Impact Management (VIM), Visitor Experience Resource Protection (VERP) have been developed over the last decade. The LAC approach focuses on the desired condition of the destination, establishing measurable limits to human induced changes and identifying management strategies to maintain or restore the desired condition. VIM assesses and manages the environmental and ‘experiential’ impacts, considering that the recreational experience and impacts are influenced not only by the level of use.
"The preservation of biodiversity is not just a job for governments. International and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and each and every individual have a role to play in changing entrenched outlooks and ending destructive patterns of behaviour."

Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General on the 2003 International Day of Biological Diversity.

**COOPERATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In recent years the necessity to involve local authorities, the general public and other stakeholder groups in various planning and management processes is being recognized, especially in the case of cross-cutting issues, such as tourism development. The strong interlinkages of nature, culture and human activities are calling for a more cross-sectoral and participatory approach. Cooperation provides an important tool for better planning and implementation, supporting sustainable development.

The need for a strengthened bottom-up approach is underlined by several international documents and policies mentioned in previous chapters, among others Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity, all putting a special emphasis on the involvement of indigenous and local communities.

The bottom-up approach is opposed to the authoritarian, top-down decision-making practices, aiming to facilitate the participation of as many stakeholders as possible, especially ordinary citizens.

**Stakeholders in tourism**

A wide range of stakeholders are involved in tourism, including:

- governments at central and regional level
- local authorities at destinations
- local communities in and around destinations
- managers of neighbouring protected areas
- the tourism sector - private sector directly: tour operators (supplying tourists to destinations; sometimes owning accommodation in destinations); tourism developers; hotel operators; facility operators; transport operators;
- sectors providing goods and services for tourism (e.g. food)
- sectors that may be affected adversely by tourism (e.g. artisanal fishermen)
- local and regional NGOs
- tourists
Participation of stakeholders

Stakeholders must be able to effectively participate in all processes of tourism development, from planning through implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Every possible stakeholder should be identified, and consultation process should be tailored to meet the needs of each stakeholder. Consultation should be open and transparent, taking into account community values, priorities, cultural issues and language barriers. It is important that relevant information is shared as early as possible, and available to all concerned parties. For putting sustainable development into practice, the interests and needs of local stakeholders must be given credit. Strong, long-term, trusting relationships and cooperation will define the successes of the future.

Cooperation with local communities

Reconciling different interests can help not only to avoid negative environmental and social impacts, but indeed bring direct benefit for local populations, and it can contribute to the conservation of natural values as well as traditional knowledge. This requires continuous communication and cooperation among the stakeholders, from the bottom up, leading to a win-win situation.

The participation of communities requires increased amount of time and resources, but inviting the public to contribute may bring important issues to the surface at an early stage, which can help in preventing or resolving conflicts, and can build confidence in the process. Some of the effective ways to consult local people include: allowing adequate time for the relevant members of the community for consultation, using a wide variety of media and ways for communication, including face to face contact in the community environment, and giving an official recognition for the consultation process through formalized structures, such as boards or committees.

Cooperation with the business sector

Regarding the involvement of stakeholders, it is especially important to consider the business sector, which is often neglected due to the seemingly opposite interests. “Business enterprises, large and small, formal and informal, provide major trading, employment and livelihood opportunities. Business opportunities available to women are contributing towards their professional development, strengthening their economic role and transforming social systems.” – as included in Agenda 21. Increasing the level of consciousness and commitment of businessmen should be specifically targeted, as their conviction and engagement is critical in providing to local people as much benefit from the project as possible. How-
ever, ungrounded expectations should not be raised when the opportunities of tourism development are presented. Although in certain cases public participation may not seem the most effective solution, especially regarding the time-consuming and costly process of enabling the affected interest groups to make informed decisions, the acceptance and profile of the project is clearly increased by making this initial investment in building partnership. It requires a strong personal and professional commitment from both sides to provide timely and accurate information. On the other hand the responsibility and will of the other stakeholders is also needed. A prerequisite for the success of the process is mutual trust, which in certain cases can prove to be the most difficult part, if there is a history of opposing interests and hostility among the stakeholders.

For the effective implementation of such participatory and multi-stakeholder processes a public outreach plan or strategy needs to be in place, taking into account the individual needs of the targeted groups to ensure their greatest involvement.

**Useful instruments to promote participation**

The dialogue with the community decision-makers can be carried out through a mandated body, such as a committee or commission, and at certain milestones well-publicized workshops open to all interested stakeholders can be organized, as well as open houses, where interested parties can raise questions in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. It is important to record all input of the workshops and circulate them for review and follow-up. A wide publicity to such events can be a useful tool to foster participation (but no surprise if not many show up at those meetings!). Newsletters informing about the process can be sent out, and also comment sheets together with the draft plan document. Experiences show that response rate can be very low, especially if the project is not controversial – views are more vigorously expressed as soon as there is a serious conflict of interest. A practical tool to help the public to visualize alternatives and get more involved, is to provide as many visual aid as possible (maps, drawings, graphics, etc.). Other lessons learned include that the planners cannot expect or demand much time from the local communities – writing and revision of documents is made by the project management. The product, that is the draft document should be ready quite quickly, as the public tends to lose interest in a short time. The external partners throughout the project might easily change. This is a normal phenomenon, but the situation can be improved by the timely and streamlined running of the project, which can keep the stakeholders interested and committed.
**Guidelines for consultation**

**Involve people early:** the earlier people are involved, the more opportunity they have to influence the outcomes.

**Communicate:** this should be two-way – the opinions of others are listened to, valued and a shared meaning is sought. A result of communication is improved knowledge of an issue and often convergence of opinion about it. Where disagreement exists the reasons for this will be known.

**Provide information and education:** providing information and education in appropriate forms helps people make decisions based on a sound understanding of the issues involved.

**Allow adequate time:** it is important to give sufficient time at the start to well establish a relationship, understand and explore the issues, agree on and collect the data that people need, communicate regularly and exchange information and ideas, as well as consider possible solutions and their implications.

**Build in flexibility:** plans need to be able to evolve as people’s understanding of a situation evolves and as more information becomes available. Periodic reviews should be built in.

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**Case study 4: Development of a methodology and tourism management plan for Zasavica Special Nature Reserve, Serbia and Montenegro**

The project, financed by UNEP – Regional Office for Europe within the framework of Biodiversity Service, implemented with the cooperation of several NGOs: Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE), Centre for Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Development (CenORT), CEEWEB and E-Team in 2004, built mainly on public participation and the involvement of local stakeholders. The project was carried out in close cooperation with the management of the protected area and included three workshops. The first workshop was held in July 2004 with the participation of representatives of the media, cultural institutions, travel agencies, local communities, as well as Sremska Mitrovica municipality.

The objectives of the meeting were to increase the local stakeholders’ knowledge on sustainable development of tourism, Biodiversity and Tourism guidelines and importance of developing tourism management plan in protected area, as well as to raise their motivation to cooperate in further steps of the project.

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3. Based on the *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas* by Lee Thomas and Julie Middleton
Participants were asked to do SWOT analyses having in mind the main question: \textit{how do you perceive tourism development in PA Zasavica and surrounding places (7 villages and Sava river area) in the next 5-10 years?}

Participants were the most active during the SWOT analyses, when they have were the highest chances to participate. For majority of them, this workshop was the first opportunity not only to get introduced to sustainable development, biodiversity and sustainable tourism concepts, but also to even participate in this kind of interactive work.

According to their comments and feedbacks, they preferred those segments of the workshop where they were able to learn about practical experience in sustainable development approach to tourism planning, and especially when it was connected to the specific characteristics of their area.

The next step of the project was a four-day assessment of “tourism products and potentials in the SNR and the connected villages of Sremska Mitrovica” in September 2004 in the form of a second workshop. The results of the assessment were presented to the participants of the second workshop in November 2004.

The participants (most of them had been present at the first workshop as well) were invited to take part in formulating the future plans, visions and goals. In the scope of the discussion, everyone was asked to vote his priority goals. Each person had six votes, to elect 6 out of 9 goals he assumed as the most important ones.

“Nature conservation”, “Financial support” and “Education and awareness-raising” were selected as top priorities. The discussion continued in small facilitated groups, where the individual goals and the corresponding activities got further detailed. The participants agreed that nature conservation - selected as the primary goal – is closely connected with “Effective management of the protected area” and “Partnership and cooperation”, as they both were considered as preconditions for the sustainable functioning of the special nature reserve Zasavica.

The participants of the third workshop – the representatives of the stakeholders - actively participated in formulating the main goals, sub-goals and related activities, resulting in an amended draft tourism management plan and the draft activity plan for the realisation of the defined goals.

The active involvement of local stakeholders not only raised awareness about the potentials and problems of the region, but undoubtedly increased the ownership of the initiative. Hopefully long-term support and mutual benefits for the protected area and the neighboring villages can be ensured in the future, underlining the statement made in the IUCN publication Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe: \textit{“Protected areas in Europe will only survive and flourish if they are supported by local people. Joint management will be the way of the future”}.

Source: Workshop Reports
Case study 5: Assessment of the sustainable tourism model in Banska Stiavnica based on the CBD Guidelines, Slovakia.

The project implemented in Banská Stiavnica was already mentioned in the section dealing with the CBD Guidelines. In order to ensure continuous ability of the local population to participate in decision-making processes, comprehensive measures of information and capacity-building in the context of cooperation formed a soundly carried out component of the project. The basic topics identified and introduced in the second project phase were:

- Tourism and Environment
- Sustainable Tourism Offers
- The Cultural and Natural Heritage
- Leisure Activities and Nature Protection
- Marketing and Eco-labels

In the 3rd phase, 10 additional education seminars on more specialized topics were organized:

- Introduction to tourism; impacts of tourism on the environment
- Tourism offers in Banska Stiavnica and its vicinity
- Introduction to sustainable tourism
- Introduction to marketing
- Banska Stiavnica in the eyes of tourists
- Vision – its purpose and development; vision of tourism development in Banska Stiavnica
- Zoning plan and its role in tourism development; zoning plan of Banska Stiavnica
- Certification in tourism
- Preparation of promotion materials
- Tourism associations – purpose, functions and forms.

The consequences drawn from the above seminars were as follows:

- practical aspects should be emphasized, being problem-based and solution-oriented, avoiding generalities and technical terms
- local issues should be addressed, possibly including outdoor activities to give on-field examples
- require some input from the participants, which could be discussed, preferably with the presence of a town representative
- intensive distribution of information is necessary: before the lectures to attract more participants, and after the lectures to present the outcomes to other stakeholders

This latter is especially important, as the recommendations and comments of the participants with regards to tourism development include several issues that could be solved immediately by drawing the attention of local people to these problems,
and making them realize that a slight change in their attitude could have major impact. There were several other observations that could be used to influence decision-makers if put forward as a common position of local people.

The complete assessment of the project is available at: http://www.ceeweb.org/viewpoint/documents/from_CEEW_point_Tourism.pdf

*Photo by Gábor Töröcsik*
INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The adverse impacts of tourism development, which in most of the cases are due to inappropriate planning, irresponsible behaviour by tourists and operators and/or lack of education and awareness of the impacts, were first recognized on islands, as their small size, limited resources, geographical dispersion and their isolation all make them especially fragile and vulnerable.

The following list, although not complete, gives a picture on the wide range of initiatives drawing attention to the need for a change in tourism, and also underlines, that there is a certain political will and support for the issue, even though legally binding instruments are scarce.

In as early as 1972, the Caribbean Conference of Churches demanded “more sensitivity and responsibility on the side of Western tourists and the tourism industry”.

In 1975, the Christian Conference of Asia held a workshop in Penang, Malaysia in order to look at the impacts of tourism where the Code of Ethics for tourists was formulated.

In 1980, the Manila Declaration on World Tourism was endorsed by The World Tourism Conference, convened by World Tourism Organization (WTO). Same place, same year: the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) concluded that tourism, as it is practiced in most parts of the Third World, has “wreaked more havoc than brought benefits”.

In 1981, at the conference on “Church and Tourism” in in Stockholm, Sweden, the Third World Tourism European Ecumenical Net (TEN) was founded, to encourage all means which increase the positive aspects within tourism and to fight all its negative aspects, with a focus on the receiving countries of the Third World.

In 1985, the General Assembly of the WTO at its session held at Sofia, Bulgaria came up with the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code.

In 1986 a conference on ‘Third World People and Tourism’ was held in Bad Boll, Germany. Its outcome was the Bad Boll Declaration, calling for a ‘New Tourism Order’ as part of a ‘New International Economic Order’.

In 1989 the World Tourism Organization adopted the Hague Declaration on Tourism.

In 1990, the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism held a workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand, dedicated to a certain impact of tourism, which is prostitution and in particular child prostitution. The international campaign End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) was founded. Since the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm, 1996, the number of groups participating in the ECPAT network increased to 72.
In 1993, the first Ministerial Conference on Tourism within Sustainable Development was held in Hyeres-Les-Palmiers, France, where a *Euro-Mediterranean Declaration on Tourism within Sustainable Development* was adopted and signed by all the Ministers of Tourism of the countries bordering the Mediterranean.

In 1995, this was followed by the preparation of the *Mediterranean Tourism Charter* which was adopted by the Ministers for Tourism in Casablanca, Morocco. The same year the participants of the Conference on Sustainable Tourism, meeting in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain adopted an 18-point *Charter for Sustainable Tourism*, providing a basis for many countries to formulate a tourism policy based on sustainable development principles. In May 1995 UNEP developed the *Guidelines for Environmentally Friendly Tourism*.

In 1996, the *Workshop on the Sustainable Development of Tourism in the East African Region*, held at the Seychelles, formulated its recommendations on the regional and national levels for the region. Also in 1996, the World Travel & Tourism Council, the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council launched together an action plan entitled “*Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development*”, seeking to translate the principles of the Rio Summit.

In 1997, at the International Conference on Biodiversity and Tourism, the *Berlin Declaration on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Tourism*, was endorsed. In the same year the *Calvià Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean* came into being in Calvià, Mallorca; the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas* was drawn up under the leadership of the EUROPARC Federation; the *Manila Declaration on the Social Impact of Tourism* was adopted at the World Tourism Leaders’ Meeting on the Social Impact of Tourism in Manila, the Philippines and the *Malé Declaration on Sustainable Tourism Development* at the Asia-Pacific Ministers' Conference on Tourism and Environment, in Malé, Maldives.

In 1998, tourism was on the agenda of *Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity* in Bratislava (CBD/COP4), based on the outcomes of the International Workshop „Biological Diversity and Sustainable Tourism“, held earlier that year in Heidelberg, Germany. The *International Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Other Islands*, was also held the same year in Lanzarote, Spain, formulating guidelines and recommendations.

In 1999, the *Commission on Sustainable Development* adopted the Decision 7/3 on Tourism and sustainable development, in New York. This year the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* was endorsed by The General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, in Santiago, Chile.

In 2000, an *NGO Statement on Tourism and Biodiversity* was made at the Fifth Meeting of the *Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD/COP5) in Nairobi. This year UNEP formulated draft principles on tourism and sustainable development, and the *Tour Operators’ Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development* was launched by UNEP in Berlin; fifteen tour operators signed the *Statement of Commitment to Sustainable Tourism Development*. 
Global initiatives

Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is an action plan for sustainable development for the 21st century and was adopted (together with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests) by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. The Rio principles as well as Agenda 21 were strongly reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002.

Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations system, governments, and major groups of civil society (namely women; children and youth; indigenous people; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological communities and farmers) in every area in which humans impact on the environment.

Agenda 21 doesn’t explicitly deal with tourism; nevertheless it provides a well-fitting framework for sustainable tourism development, meaning that the principles of sustainable development can be applied to tourism activities.

Some relevant excerpts from Agenda 21:

From the provisions regarding rural development

“There is, therefore, a need to intensify agriculture by diversifying the production systems for maximum efficiency in the utilization of local resources, while minimizing environmental and economic risks. Where intensification of farming systems is not possible, other on-farm and off-farm employment opportunities should be identified and developed, such as cottage industries, wildlife utilization, aquaculture and fisheries, non-farm activities, such as light village-based manufacturing, farm commodity processing, agribusiness, recreation and tourism, etc.”

From the provisions regarding land use

“The broad objective is to facilitate allocation of land to the uses that provide the

The challenge of implementing sustainable development, the key objective of Agenda 21 has been placed at the local level: “By 1996 most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on a ‘local Agenda 21’ for the community” (Agenda 21, Section 28.28)

Local Agenda 21 is a participatory planning process led by the local government and including the whole community, with a view to establish a sustainable development strategy and action plan ensuring environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being in
the given area, based on the consensus of the local people. Agenda 21 says about local governments that “…as the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development…”

Key elements of the implementation of Local Agenda 21 are

- full and effective community involvement;
- assessment of current conditions;
- defining goals and objectives within the context of a wider sustainable development strategy;
- setting targets for achieving specific goals; monitoring and reporting.

The process recognizes the local community as the most competent authority to determine its needs and development goals. Over 6500 municipalities have taken the challenge of a Local Agenda 21 planning process, and plenty of them are more or less affected by tourism. This small-scale and bottom-up approach makes Local Agenda 21 well adaptive to specific problems and different circumstances, whether in an emerging or an established tourist destination. Considering the great number and diversity of stakeholders involved in tourism, especially the role of the business sector, this proves to be a quite complex planning and management exercise for the local community.

In most of the cases tourism is not the primary concern of the Local Agenda 21, but according to the 2001 survey of ICLEI, the most important focus areas of these strategies were transportation, energy management, land use, biodiversity, climate change and air pollution, which are all quite clearly interrelated with tourism activities as well. However, the insufficient resources and the lack of national commitment or EU level interest, does not allow the Local Agenda 21 initiative to evolve into its full potential.

4. International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, founded by local governments in 1990
The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)


The principal objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity are

- the conservation of biological diversity,
- sustainable use of its components,
- the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, as well as by appropriate funding.

Tourism has been discussed as a cross-cutting issue within the CBD for a number of years. As tourism forms one of the world’s biggest economic sectors, the Convention has realized the necessity to get involved in tourism development procedures, which therefore led to the development of international rules and principles focusing on sustainability.

After years of consultations, the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (CBD/COP7), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2004, adopted the “International guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity and protected areas, including fragile riparian and mountain ecosystems” - CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development for short.

These Guidelines are intended to assist Parties to the CBD, public authorities and stakeholders at all levels, to apply the provisions of the Convention to the sustainable development and management of tourism activities. These guidelines can be seen as assistance to all stakeholders of tourism development and biodiversity conservation (including policy-makers, decision-makers, managers, whether in national or local government, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations or other organizations) as they define areas of application, management processes, tasks and responsibilities of the respective institutions, environmental impact assessment and monitoring. Further the notification process, public relations and equal distribution of benefits are of great importance for the implementation of sustainable tourism.

As the most successful multilateral environmental agreement, the
CBD constitutes the appropriate framework to elaborate global guidelines on biological diversity and tourism development, thus promoting a balance of the requirements of both fields.

**Elements of the guidelines**

A. Scope
The Guidelines cover all forms and activities of tourism, including but not limited to, conventional mass tourism, ecotourism, nature- and culture-based tourism, heritage tourism, cruise tourism, leisure and sports tourism. These activities should be consistent with the principles of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The Guidelines are applicable for tourism and biological diversity in all geographical locations and tourist destinations.

B. The policy-making, development planning and management process

1) Framework for management of tourism and biodiversity;

Steps of the management process should be undertaken through a multi-stakeholder process, including government departments, the tourism sector, NGOs, indigenous and local communities to ensure their participation, to increase their awareness and promote the exchange of information and best practices. The policy-making, development planning and management process comprises the following steps:

- Baseline information and review;
- Vision and goals;
- Objectives;
- Review of legislation and control measures;
- Impact assessment;
- Impact management and mitigation;
- Decision making;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring and reporting;
- Adaptive management

2) Notification process in relation to such a management framework;

All stakeholders, who may be affected, including indigenous and local communities should be provided with full and timely information on the tourism development proposals, taking into account local, regional
and national impacts. The recommended measures include the list of information to be disclosed to ensure appropriate transparency.

c) Public education, capacity-building and awareness-raising concerning tourism and biodiversity.

Education and awareness-raising activities should address a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public, the professional sectors, all levels of governments, and the tourism sector along with the tourists, to encourage the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and avoid unfavourable impacts. Capacity-building activities should contribute to the effective implementation of the guidelines by enabling stakeholders on all levels to participate in the process.

Case study: Promoting sustainable tourism in Central and Eastern Europe
Assessment of the sustainable tourism development model of Banska Stiavnica based on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development

The town of Banska Stiavnica in the Slovak Republic is famous for its rich mining tradition; the technical and cultural heritage together with the natural values deserves the UNESCO World Heritage designation. Banska Stiavnica was selected as the model area for the promotion of sustainable tourism, serving as a pilot project for the implementation of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in the Central and Eastern European region, with the coordination of Amber Trail, a local NGO.

The activities of the project have been assessed with a view to these guidelines. The following list illustrates the possible contents of the initial part of the CBD-Guidelines “Baseline information and review”, which needs to be considered during the preparation and planning of such projects, as compiled and evaluated in the feasibility study and the initial phase of the Banska Stiavnica project:

- International environment (ongoing EU programs, projects in the wider geographical context)
- Legislation background (EU and national level; both with regards to nature conservation and tourism: nature and landscape preservation, protected areas, agriculture, water, construction and buildings, international conventions in the field of biodiversity) – including the possible impact of the project in terms of support it might give to the national legislation
• Institutional framework (competent decision making and implementation bodies, both with regards to nature conservation and tourism: government, ministries, municipal and local authorities, National Park Directorates, agricultural institutions, water management institutions, building and construction institutions, educational and scientific institutions, NGOs etc.)
• Business climate (investments, structure of employers and entrepreneurs, SME sector, employment rates, human resources)
• International, regional and national trends in tourism
• Management capacity of the region, possible structures for the coordination of activities
• Nature and biodiversity aspects (location, features and development of nature and landscape protection, natural values, geological composition, climate, pedology, flora, fauna, habitats, communities, ecosystems, protected areas and ecological networks, water sources, lakes);
• The cultural heritage (cultural historical information, previous land-use and conservation management, aesthetics, ethnography, history, architecture and archaeology),
• Built environment, architecture (castle, religious buildings, technical monuments, the use and condition of historical buildings)
• Agriculture and forestry (area and conditions of cultivated land, such as meadows, pastures etc., animal breeding, vineyards, structure and ownership, market for products)
• Technical infrastructure (water line, sewage, gas, electricity, waste collection and treatment, transport and roads, landscape management, e.g. forests, parks, paths)
• Informational infrastructure (tourist information offices, internet, orientation system, information panels, marking and general upkeep of trails)
• Evaluation of the quality of services (food, appearance of restaurants, offers in tasting, animations, accommodation, tour operators, transport and services for the motorists, and other services, such as banks and financial services, medical services, security)
• Evaluation of existing products (tourism offers, including different forms of tourism, guide services, museums and galleries, cultural and sporting events, water recreation / lakes, services and shops, theatre, and winter recreation.)
• Tourism (history of tourism activities, competition, structure and number of visitors, market research, marketing strategy)
• Public awareness about tourism and nature conservation (tourism,
industry, agriculture, traffic, cultural values, traditions, natural assets, development schemes, interest of local people, etc.)

- Possible sources of funding (EU pre-accession funds, Structural Funds, national resources, reallocation of local taxes, industry, etc.)
- Identification of stakeholders
- This list might not be comprehensive, however it can serve as a good example for similar initiatives.
- The complete assessment of the project is available at:

The Pan-European context

Over and above the Convention on Biological Diversity, there are several other biodiversity initiatives in Europe, as well as environmental regulations. The *Bern and Bonn Conventions* (1979 and 1983 respectively) give policies about species and habitats, but make fewer legal requirements. The *Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy* responds to the CBD, and was endorsed by the environment ministers of 55 countries in Sofia in 1995, at the Third Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process. It is a framework for efforts to conserve and improve nature and landscape throughout Europe, building on existing agreements.

The *UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters* (the Aarhus Convention) was adopted in 1998, at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process. The Aarhus Convention is forging a new process for public participation, allowing informed decision-making, by ensuring that the public has access to environmental information, including all “activities or measures affecting or likely to affect the elements of the environment”. Most countries of Central and Eastern Europe are Parties to the Convention. This Convention is important for tourism development in the context of it being a cross-cutting issue, as it supports information flows, transparency and public involvement (all aspects to sustainable tourism development), but it does not directly address tourism.
Related EU policies

The Biodiversity Strategy
The Community Biodiversity Strategy provides the framework for developing Community policies and instruments in order to comply with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Biodiversity Strategy aims to identify gaps in the European Community conservation policy, and to promote biological diversity into the policies of the Community. The Strategy includes objectives to be achieved in the context of the relevant Community policies (natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, forests, tourism, energy and transport, regional policies and spatial planning, development and economic cooperation) and instruments in order to meet these obligations.

The Natura 2000 network
Directed by the European Union (EU), the Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (1992) shape national laws by directing the conservation of specific species and habitats. The Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive make the Natura 2000 network. The aim is to create a coherent ecological network of protected areas in the EU, where habitats and species are maintained and restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. The preservation of biodiversity in the designated sites may require human activities to be maintained or encouraged. The purpose of the Natura 2000 network is therefore not to create nature sanctuaries where all human activity will be systematically excluded. However, human activities must remain compatible with the conservation aims of the designated sites. Therefore tourism activities can be carried out in and around Natura 2000 sites, as long as they are properly managed and kept within carrying capacity. The status of being a Natura 2000 site may increase the value of the area as a destination, and in turn, deriving benefits can and should be dedicated to maintenance and restoration.

Article 6 of the Directive obliges the Member States to establish conservation measures. Management plans, specifically designed for the sites concerned or integrated into other development plans seem to be the best way of achieving this. Although there are no relevant regulations, it would be especially important to include the local community in planning and management, because human activities will remain an organic part of the network.

A significant problem with the Natura 2000 network is that inhabitants of these areas are not informed sufficiently and therefore fear restrictions in
their home region. Tourism and tourists that respect the conservation aims of Natura 2000 sites can contribute to putting Natura 2000 into a better picture.

**Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment**
According to the Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessments of the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment, programs and plans with likely significant effects on the environment should be subject to strategic environmental assessment (SEA), in order to evaluate their environmental performance and to influence the way they are implemented. (According to the SEA Protocol to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (the Espoo Convention): „A strategic environmental assessment shall be carried out for plans and programmes which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry including mining, transport, regional development, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use [...]“) One of the most important strongholds of strategic environmental assessment is that it is not a post-evaluation process, but it is developed in parallel with the policy or concept, promoting environmental aspects during the preparation works. Consequently it ensures the incorporation and achievement of environmental objectives, improves the environmental integrity of plans and programs, and drives the entire policy towards sustainability by identifying development options and providing better alternatives. Presently there is no generally accepted methodology for the ex-ante evaluation of plans and programs, however, there are recommendations concerning the applicable methodology (such as the “MEANS Collection - Evaluation of socio-economic programmes”).

**Tourism policy**
The Treaty of Maastricht included, for the first time, 'measures in the sphere of tourism' in the list of Community activities foreseen in support of the Community’s overall objectives. However, the Treaty gives no particular guidance for a community tourism policy and there is no specific legal base for Community measures on tourism. This means that any act of the Council of Ministers in the field of tourism needs unanimity among all Member States.

One of the main roles of the Directorate General Enterprise’s Tourism Unit is to play a co-ordinating role within the European Commission, aiming to ensure that the interests of tourism are fully taken into account in the preparation of legislation and in the operation of programmes and policies which are not themselves conceived in terms of tourism objectives.

With regards to tourism, the European Commission, recognising the im-
important role of the sector in the European economy, has been increas-
ingly involved in tourism since the early 1980s, in co-operation with the
Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee
and the Committee of the Regions.
The Commission highlights the need to enhance co-operation on and the
consistency of tourism policies among the stakeholders involved in tour-
ism. The Commission aims in particular to foster tourism’s competitivity
ness and sustainability. The promotion of sustainable development and
the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as the preservation of the natu-
ral and cultural heritage are listed on the agenda. However, tourism is
primarily considered as a profit-yielding and employment-creating indus-
try - these aspects, unified under the aegis of promoting competitiveness,
as laid down in the Lisbon Strategy of the European Commission, are
clearly predominant.
In practice, many programmes and policies either include a tourism di-
ension or have a significant impact on tourism-related activities. How-
ever, the lack of legally binding regulations directly concerning tourist
activities, the lack of legal basis for Community actions and the strong
political will of the Member States to keep the issue in their own compe-
tence, makes it quite improbable, that the EU will play a determining role
in forming national tourism policies.

**Initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe**

An important regional initiative is the Framework Convention on the
Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, which was
signed by seven countries in May 2003.
The Convention calls for the more effective implementation of existing
global and regional documents and policies, and formulates the intention
to “promote sustainable tourism providing benefits to local people, increase cooperation
and pursue policies aiming at the promoting trans-boundary co-operation”.
The Convention follows the example of the Convention of the Protec-
tion of Alps, where the tourism protocol is the tool for developing strate-
gies to use tourism as a resource for strengthening the economy of the
Alpine countries, while mitigating the impacts of tourist activities. In this
matter, the Carpathian Convention might also be supplemented with a
thematic protocol to address tourism issues more specifically, taking into

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5 The Carpathian countries are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania,
Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine.
account the assets that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the rural areas possess, including:

- traditional, environmentally friendly production and consumption patterns are still in place;
- cultural identity and traditional knowledge still exists or can be revitalized;
- high biological and landscape diversity;
- significant unspoilt/unexploited natural resources, giving the opportunity for creating special local products;
- various employment options;
- natural basis for sustainable agriculture exists;

Certain sustainable economic activities are still practiced (such as artisanal activities, extensive agricultural methods).

These assets increase the responsibility of policy- and decision-makers to make full use of the development potential of the region, while preserving the natural and cultural values.

Beside the opportunities, the region faces some specific challenges as well. As a historical heritage, in the field of cooperation among the various levels of decision-making, dialogue and involvement of different stakeholders, significant improvement is still necessary.

Photo by Piotr Dabrowski


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